THE WORLD.

NUMBER CXXXV.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *July* the 31ſt, 1755.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM,

SIR,

THERE are few things which contribute more to miſlead our judgments, and pervert our morals, than the confuſion of our ideas ariſing from the abuſe of words. Hence it hourly happens that virtues and vices are ſo blended and diſguiſed by taking each other's names, that almoſt the worſt actions a man can be guilty of, ſhall be attributed to an elevated and laudable ſpirit. Thus the moſt extravagant fellow living, who, to keep up an oſtentatious figure by all kinds of expence, ſets his country and conſcience to ſale, ſhall be extolled by all about him as a noble generous ſoul, above the low conſideration

ſideration of dirty money. The high-mettled blood, who debauches his friend's wife or daughter; who withholds a tradeſman's juſt debt, that he may be punctual with a ſharper; in ſhort, who dares do any injury, and run the man through the body who ſhall reſent it, calls himſelf, and is called by the world, a man of gallantry, and honour. OEconomy is put out of countenance by the odious word avarice; and the moſt rapacious covetouſneſs takes ſhelter under the terms prudence and diſcretion. An eaſy thoughtleſsneſs of temper, which betrays the owner to recommend a ſcoundrel; to lend to, or be bound for a ſpendthrift; to conform with all the gallant ſchemes of a profligate; to heap favours on a pimp or ſharper, even to the neglect of meritorious friends, and frequently to the diſtreſſing a wife and children; in fine, that eaſy diſpoſition of mind which cannot reſiſt importunity, be the ſolicitor ever ſo unworthy, is dignified with the moſt amiable of all epithets, good-nature; and ſo the thing itſelf brought into diſgrace by the miſapplication of the word.

THE bare mention of theſe abuſes is ſufficient to lead every thinking reader into a larger catalogue of the like kind. Hence it is that falſhood uſurps the place of truth, and ignominy of merit; and though this may have been the complaint of all ages and nations of the civilized world, yet ſtill the cheaters and the cheated are as numerous as ever.

I HAVE been led into theſe reflections by the ſuperficial and miſtaken opinions which are almoſt univerſally received of two gentlemen in a neighbouring county, at whoſe houſes I have been lately entertained, and whoſe characters I ſhall here delineate, concealing their real names under the fictitious ones of Sombrinus and Hilarius.

SOMBRINUS

SOMBRINUS is a younger brother of a noble family, whoſe intrinſic worth having been deſcried and valued by a man of ſolid ſenſe in the neighbourhood, procured him the happineſs of his only daughter in marriage, with a fortune of a thouſand pounds per annum. Sombrinus is a man of extraordinary natural parts, cultivated by much reading and obſervation: of nice honour; ſincere in his friendſhips, which are but few, and univerſally humane. A warm lover of his religion and country, and an excellent juſtice of the peace, in which capacity he takes infinite pains to allay bitterneſs, and compoſe quarrels. Pious himſelf, a regularity of devotion is kept up in his family. His numerous iſſue (to which he is rather eſſentially affectionate, than fond) obliges him to œconomy, though his natural inclination is ſtronger towards diſpenſing riches, than hoarding them. His equipage and table are rather neat and ſufficient than ſumptuous. Reaſonable people are always welcome to him; but the riotous find their account neither in his temperance, nor his converſation. With all theſe good qualities, his too great avidity for book knowledge, his penetration into men and manners, and his exalted notions of reaſon and rectitude, combining with a ſickly habit of body, render him apt to be ſplenetic or ſilent, upon occaſions wherein his delicacy is groſly offended. Hence the much injured Sombrinus lies under the calumny of being a very *ill-natured man*, among all thoſe who have but a ſlight acquaintance with him; while even his intimates, who ſee him at all hours, and in every mood, though convinced of the goodneſs of his heart, and the purity of his intentions, are yet obliged, when contending in his favour, to grant that he has often the appearance of an *ill-humoured man*.

HILARIUS

HILARIUS is a downright country gentleman; a *bon vivant*; an indefatigable ſportſman. He can drink his gallon at a ſitting, and will tell you he was never *ſick nor ſorry* in his life. He married a moſt diſagreeable woman with a vaſt fortune, whom however he contents himſelf with ſlighting, merely becauſe he cannot take the trouble of uſing her ill. For the ſame reaſon he is ſeldom ſeen to be angry, unleſs his favourite horſe ſhould happen to be lamed, or the game act infringed. Having an eſtate of above five thouſand a year, his ſtrong beer, ale and wine cellar are always well ſtored; to either of which, as alſo to his table, abounding in plenty of good victuals ill ſorted and ill dreſſed, every voter and foxhunter claims a kind of right. He roars for the church, which he never viſits, and is eternally cracking his coarſe jeſts, and talking ſmut to the parſons; whom if he can make fuddled, and expoſe to contempt, it is the higheſt pleaſure he can enjoy. As for his lay friends, nothing is more frequent with him than to ſet them and their ſervants dead drunk upon their horſes, to whoſe ſagacity it is left to find the way home in a dark winter's night; and ſhould any of them happen to be found half ſmothered in a ditch next morning, it affords him excellent diverſion for a twelve-month after. His ſons are loobies, and his daughters hoydens: not that he is covetous, but careleſs in their educations. Through the ſame indolence, his baſtards, of which he has not a few, are left to the pariſh; and his men and maid ſervants run riot without controul, for want of diſcipline in the family. He has a mortal averſion to any interruption in his mirth. Tell him of a calamity that has befallen one of his acquaintance, he aſks where ſtands the bottle? Propoſe to him the aſſiſting at a quarter ſeſſions, he is

engaged

engaged at a cock-match; or ſhould he, through curioſity, make his appearance there, ever jovial and facetious, and equally free from the diſturbance of paſſion and compaſſion, he will crack his joke from the bench with the vagrant whom he ſentences to be whipt through the county, or with the felon whom he condemns to the gallows. Such is his condeſcenſion, that he makes no ſcruple to take his pipe and pot at an alehouſe with the very dregs of the people. As for the parliament (though his ſeat in it coſts him very dear in houſekeeping) if the fate of the nation depended upon his attendance there, he would not be prevailed on to quit the country in the ſhooting or hunting ſeaſon, unleſs forced up by a call of the houſe. In fine, it is an invariable maxim with him, let what will happen, never to give himſelf one moment's concern. Are you in health and proſperity? No one is readier to club a laugh with you; but he has no ear to the voice of diſtreſs or complaint. The buſineſs of his life is (what he calls) pleaſure; to promote this, he annually conſumes his large income, which without any deſign of his, may happen indeed to do ſome good,

And wander, heav'n directed, to the poor.

With theſe endowments, there are at leaſt nine in ten, who give the preference to Hilarius, and laviſh on him the epithets of the worthieſt, the nobleſt, and the beſt-natured creature alive; while Sombrinus is ridiculed as a *deadly* wiſe man, a milkſop, ſtingy, proud, ſullen, and ill-natured. Yet Sombrinus is the man to whom every one flies, whenever there is a demand for juſtice, good ſenſe, wholeſome counſel, or real charity: to Hilarius, when the belly only is to be conſulted, or the time diſſipated.

Thus